

Statement: Civil Society supports Families of the Disappeared objecting to GSP+
April 25, 2017

We, the undersigned civil society organizations, support the demand of "Association of the Relatives of the Enforced Disappearance" in Kilinochchi District, to the European Parliament, requesting that GSP+ status not be restored until at the very least, the list of surrendeers/detainees is released by the Sri Lankan government.

Families of the Disappeared have been protesting all across the North-East for over two months now in extreme heat and horrid conditions, as a result of being utterly frustrated and disillusioned with the government's failure to act on the issue of disappearances and provide them with answers about the fates of their loved ones.

In addition to the demand made by these families, we also note with serious concern, that Sri Lanka has failed to substantively comply with the 27 international conventions which the European Parliament requires compliance with in order for a state to be eligible for GSP+ status. In particular, Sri Lanka is in ongoing violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). If European Parliament chooses to restore Sri Lanka's GSP+ status while this non-compliance persists, it will only serve to undermine the EU's credibility on human rights protection, and let down the many victims of human rights violations, such as families of the disappeared, in Sri Lanka.

The European Parliament has an opportunity now to encourage promotion and protection of human rights in Sri Lanka if decides against restoring Sri Lanka's GSP+ status. This would send a strong message to the Sri Lankan government that non-compliance with international human rights conventions and a failure to address past human rights violations will not be tolerated by the international community. We accordingly call on Members of European Parliament from all political parties to place victims at the centre of their decision-making and vote yes to the Motion for a Resolution raised by the GUE/NGL group, against restoring Sri Lanka's GSP+ status.

Signatories:

Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research
Centre for Protection and Promotion of Human Rights
Jaffna University Teachers' Association
Jaffna University Students Union
Maatram Foundation
Mannar Citizens' Committee
Tamil Civil Society Forum